

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A surgical dissector for dissecting tissue comprising:

- a) a shaft defining a longitudinal axis;
- b) a distal tissue dissecting surface carried by the shaft for dissecting tissue, the distal surface articulatable relative to the longitudinal axis, the articulatable distal surface being remotely movable between a first position relative to the longitudinal axis to a second position relative to the longitudinal axis; and
- c) a position indicator associated with the shaft and movable with the dissecting surface to indicate the position of the dissecting surface.

26. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 25 wherein the position indicator comprises a light source carried by the shaft and disposed to indicate the position of the articulatable distal tissue dissecting surface.

27. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector of claim 25, wherein the shaft includes one or more articulation joints carried by the shaft to permit the distal end portion to move relative to the more proximal portion of the shaft.

28. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector of claim 25 further comprising an articulation mechanism operatively associated with the articulatable distal dissecting surface, wherein actuation of the articulation mechanism articulates the articulatable distal tip between the first position and the second position.

29. (Currently Amended) The surgical dissector as described in claim ~~27~~ 25 wherein the articulation mechanism further comprises a rotatable member operably coupled to the articulatable distal surface, wherein when the rotatable member rotates, the articulatable distal surface articulates.

30. (Currently Amended) The surgical dissector as described in claim ~~27~~ 25 wherein the articulation mechanism further comprises a coupling member operably coupled to the articulatable distal surface, wherein actuation of the articulation mechanism axially moves the coupling member and articulates the articulatable distal surface.

31. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 26 wherein at least a portion of the light is disposed to contact and dissect tissue.

32. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 26 wherein the light is emitted from an LED or a light transmission pipe.

33. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 25 wherein at least a portion of the shaft is flexible.

34. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 25 further comprising an attachment feature about the distal surface for the attachment of a guide therein.

35. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 34 wherein the attachment feature comprises an aperture for the reception of the guide therein.

36. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 25 wherein the articulatable distal surface is attached to the shaft by at least one pivot.

37. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 26 wherein the light source has a luminous intensity between about 20 lux and about 50,000 lux.

38. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 26 wherein the light is carried at a distal tip of the shaft and has at least one arcuate surface.

39. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 25 wherein the distal surface can articulate through an angle of up to about 170 degrees.

40. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 35 wherein the articulatable distal surface can articulate positively and negatively relative to the longitudinal axis.

41. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 35 wherein the guide fits over the attachment feature.

42. (Previously Presented) The surgical dissector as described in claim 38 wherein the distal tip is clear.

43. (Previously Presented) A method for separating a tissue at a selected site comprising:

- a) positioning a dissection surface of a dissector near to selected tissue, the dissector including an elongated shaft with a dissecting surface at a distal end of the shaft and a position indicator near the dissection surface;
- b) advancing the dissecting surface through the selected tissue to create a desired dissection path while monitoring the position indicator through the tissue; and

c) simultaneously articulating the dissecting surface relative to the shaft.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43 wherein the dissector includes a guide.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43 wherein the dissector includes a port for fluid dissection.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43 wherein the dissector includes a working lumen.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein advancing includes separating a tubular structure from connective tissue and the structure of a blood vessel.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47 wherein dissector includes a guide.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47 wherein the dissector includes a port for fluid dissection.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47 wherein the dissector includes a working lumen.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47, wherein the blood vessel is a pulmonary vein and the connective tissue is the pericardium.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein the steps are part of a procedure for treating atrial fibrillation.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, further comprising detecting the position of the dissecting surface prior to advancing the dissecting surface through the selected tissue.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, further comprising differentiating tissue by observing a visible energy passing through the selected tissue.

55. (Currently Amended) A method of separating tissue ~~with a dissector~~ at a selected site with a dissector comprising an articulatable dissecting surface, comprising:

- a) positioning a dissecting surface of the dissector near to a first side of the selected tissue when the first side of the tissue is obscured from a user's line of sight by a visible second side of the tissue including remotely articulating the dissecting surface, the dissecting surface having associated therewith a position indicator for indicating the position of the dissection surface;
- b) monitoring the position indicator through the selected tissue to detect the position of the dissecting surface; and
- c) advancing the dissecting surface through the selected tissue to create a desired dissecting path.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55 wherein the dissector includes a guide or suture.

57. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55 wherein the dissector includes a port for fluid dissection.

58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55 wherein the dissector includes a working lumen.

59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55, further comprising differentiating tissue between a first tissue and a second tissue by observing the position indicator through the first or second tissues.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 59 wherein the position indicator is a light passing through the selected tissue to determine the desired dissection path.
61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 in which the light can be used to illuminate the surgical area.
62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55 wherein detecting the position includes visually locating a light operatively associated with the dissecting surface by observing the light passing through the selected tissue.
63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 62 wherein detecting the position includes differentiating tissue by observing the light passing through the selected tissue to determine the desired dissection path.
64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55 wherein the dissecting surface includes a blunt tip that is carried at a distal end portion of the dissector.
65. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55, wherein the steps are performed sequentially.
66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55 in which the dissection path defines a plane in the tissue and the steps of separating tissue are repeated through more than one plane in the tissue.
67. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55 wherein advancing the dissecting surface includes creating a path between a pair of pulmonary veins and a pericardium.
68. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67 wherein the dissector includes a guide.

69. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67 wherein the dissector includes a port for fluid dissection.

70. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67 wherein the dissector includes a working lumen.